

Customs commitment to quality management

By Lionel Woodward
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Customs Service

Customs, and all government departments and agencies, are involved in a continual process of change. Few changes are more important than the financial management reforms now being implemented in the public service.

Last year the Commonwealth's Management Advisory Board which advises the Government on public service issues, appointed a project team to examine financial management best practice. Two Customs officers, Jenny Peachey and Marisa Hewitt were appointed to that project team with Jenny as the project leader. The results of the team's research were published in the report: *Beyond bean counting. Effective financial management in the APS – 1998 and beyond*. In this issue of *Manifest* Jenny tells how this important task was carried out and explains some of the main findings. In a companion article Deputy Chief Executive Officer Mick Roche writes about activity-based costing in Customs and how it will help us make better management decisions.

The Australian Customs Service has an enormous task in maintaining the integrity of our border areas which include 37 000 kilometres of coastline and an offshore marine area of responsibility larger than the Australian mainland. The task is particularly challenging in the Torres Strait which represents the closest example we have to a land border with another country. These challenges are illustrated in an article by Les Jones describing Customs role in northern Australia and how we meet our responsibilities there.

Other articles describe how Customs has embraced a new era in staff education and why we have decided to become the first major Commonwealth government agency to outsource all of our information technology services.

This, the second edition of *Manifest*, gives further insight into the work of Customs and tells, in part, not only how we perform aspects of our work, but also how we are planning for future needs.

Contents

A new era in staff education <i>Customs–university partnership advances quality assurance</i>	2
Pioneering prudential audits <i>Can they aid industry compliance?</i>	5
Torres Strait: response and responsibility <i>Customs role in a key region</i>	6
<i>A Customs officer's varied work</i>	10
PACE overtakes PASS <i>Passenger processing for the 21st century</i>	11
More than counting beans <i>The scope for public service financial reform</i>	12
Costing the future <i>How activity-based costing helps decision-making</i>	16
Customs outsources all its information technology <i>Why this important step was taken</i>	18
World acclaim for Australia's detector dogs <i>Moves to establish a unique canine gene pool</i>	20
The Operation Calculate story <i>Inter-agency cooperation underscores drug bust success</i>	22
Customs vessel had valued wartime service <i>The Vigilant's role in war and peace</i>	26
Customs statistics	30
Customs to build historical collection	32

Manifest

Published by
Australian Customs Service

Editor, Public Affairs, Australian Customs Service,
5 Constitution Avenue, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6275 6785

Fax (02) 6275 6992

<http://www.customs.gov.au>

public.affairs@customs.gov.au

ISSN 1329-7961

Design by Art Attack Pty Ltd Canberra